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AUTHOR Howe, Robert W.
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ABSTRACT

Several projects were undertaken in 1986 for the purpose of maintaining and improving the ERIC system. This report focuses on one of the projects that involved two surveys of users of the ERIC system and its products. Survey I consisted of a stratified sample of 500 ERIC Standing Order Customers (SOCs). These sites subscribe to the ERIC microfiche collection and represent the heaviest users of ERIC. The respondents represented all types of SOCs and included 70 percent of the state departments of education and school districts that subscribe to the ERIC microfiche. Survey II was a sample of 200 administrators and teachers selected from a list of 2,800 schools surveyed periodically since 1969 by the SMEAC Information Reference Center at The Ohio State University. In addition, a sample of 50 administrators and teachers were sampled in Ohio. Each survey is described in terms of its: (1) sample population; (2) data collection procedures; and (3) data results and analysis. A summary is provided as well as a discussion of specific user recommendations. Appendices contain survey letters and questionnaires. (ML)

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ED277565

Survey of Selected

ERIC Users - 1986

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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Robert W. Howe
Project Coordinator
Council of ERIC Directors

December 30, 1986

ERIC/SMEAC
1200 Chambers Rd., Rm 310
Columbus, OH 43212

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INTRODUCTION

The Executive Committee of the Council of ERIC Directors appointed several committees and task force groups during 1986 to complete projects that would be helpful for maintaining and improving the ERIC system.

A project given high priority was a survey of users of the ERIC system and its products. Two surveys were conducted during the summer of 1986.

Survey I involved a stratified sample of 500 ERIC Standing Order Customers (SOCs). These sites subscribe to the ERIC microfiche collection and represent the heaviest users of ERIC. The respondents represented all types of SOCs and included over 70% of the state departments of education and school districts that get ERIC microfiche.

Survey II was a sample of 200 administrators and teachers selected from a list of 2800 schools (all states were included) surveyed periodically since 1969 by the SMEAC Information Reference Center at The Ohio State University. In addition a sample of 50 administrators and teachers were sampled in Ohio.

Data from both surveys are reported and discussed. The summary highlights requested modifications of the ERIC program.

SURVEY OF STANDING ORDER CUSTOMERS (SOCs)

Sample Description

A random sample of 500 SOCs (not including ERIC Clearinghouses) was selected from the mailing list maintained by EDRS. The sample was selected to represent the SOCs proportional to their numbers by state and by type of organization or agency (college or university, state department of education, public schools, etc.). A total of 423 responses were received. Responses were proportional to the types of agencies and organizations surveyed, but were skewed by state (some states had higher response rates than others). Responses for the high and low responding states were not significantly different.

Data Collection

A questionnaire* and a stamped return envelope were mailed to each of the sample sites in June, 1986. Follow-up cards were sent to approximately 180 sites in August, 1986. In addition, approximately 60 phone calls were made to clarify comments on survey forms or to obtain additional information

Report and Analysis of Data

The first question requested information regarding major problems of users that could be assisted by a service such as ERIC. Data are reported in Table 1. While nine of the listed problems were checked by approximately 70% or more of the respondents, the diversity of the problems checked by sites was as evident as the similarities; some sites checked many of the items, others checked a few. Term papers and proposals were not listed on the questionnaire; these probably would have received substantially higher rankings if they had been included.

*See Appendices for a copy of the questionnaire.

TABLE 1

Problems of Users
as Identified by SOCs

What are the major problems of your users for which a service such as ERIC can provide assistance?

Number	%	
347	82	Developing/improving curricula
305	72	Developing/improving instructional materials
321	76	Developing/improving instruction
292	69	Developing/improving administration
216	51	Developing/improving facilities
275	65	Developing/improving policies and standards
178	42	Developing/improving community relations
300	71	Designing research
330	78	Using research to improve practice
165	39	Writing a speech
148	35	Developing legislation
321	76	Providing awareness/access to reseach to others
326	75	Providing awareness/access to curriculum materials to others
296	70	Providing awareness/access to instructional materials
102	24	Others*
85	20	Term papers
63	15	Proposals

*Only items with 10 or more responses are listed.

The second item, Table 2, was designed to identify the types of information services that would be most useful to the SOCs. Copies of research reports (which are available from ERIC) was selected by 60% of the sample. Other items currently available (curriculum guides and instructional materials) were selected by over 40% of the sample. Analyses and interpretation of research or practice were desired by 49% of the sample; while ERIC does some of this, many users clearly want more. Forty percent of the sample desired to have copies of statistical data available; this is not covered extensively by ERIC at the current time, though there have been discussions regarding providing this type of information.

TABLE 2

Information Services
Desired by SOCs

Please check the three *information services which would be most useful, if available, for solving the problems of your users.

Number	%	
228	54	Specific searches of the literature on request
207	49	Analysis and interpretation of research or practice
123	29	Routine mailing of current information
165	39	Telephone or other direct contacts with information specialists
182	43	Copies of instructional materials
190	45	Copies of curriculum guides
254	60	Copies of research reports
169	40	Copies of statistical data
89	21	Other
51	12	Indexes
21	5	Conference Proceedings

*Some people checked more than three items.

The SOCs also indicated a desire for assistance from information specialists (people who know the topic or content area and how to search the database) for both searching and assistance in obtaining other information.

Large libraries and those doing a substantial amount of searching (either online or manual) added indexes. This item would probably have drawn a much heavier response if it had been listed. Comments on some of the following items will reinforce the desire for more indexes.

The third item, presented in Table 3, asked respondents to indicate what information products were most useful to their users in solving problems. Journals, abstracts, and bibliographies were selected as being very useful by about 70% of those responding. All items received means of below three, indicating they were considered useful by the people responding. Many comments were made on three items. About 75 people, primarily those searching online extensively, indicated topical bulletins and digests were not of much use to them unless they were online with microfiche back-up. About 110 people indicated informational newsletters were useful to them for current awareness, but not for solving problems.

This item clearly indicated substantial differences between what various SOCs believe are useful to them; those who do a substantial amount of online searching and who do not maintain vertical files or similar files do not want small pieces of information. They also want useful information entered into the database so that the items can be retrieved by a computer search and then have the item available on microfiche.

TABLE 3

Usefulness of Information Products
for Solving Problems
for SOC Users

How useful are each of the following types of information products to your users in solving problems?

	1 Useful	2	3	4	5 Not Useful	Mean
Bibliographies and indexes. . . .	268	64	26	8	4	1.4
Abstracts	290	65	21	1	1	1.3
Journals and magazines.	299	52	22	4	6	1.3
Newsletters (topical)	68	87	153	61	19*	2.7
Review and synthesis of research or practice	183	104	37	7	8	1.7
Instructional materials	173	107	69	18	9	1.9
Curriculum guides	156	111	73	19	5	1.9
Digests (short summaries of research and practice)	104	108	54	71	21*	2.4
Newsletters (informational) . . .	55	76	141	71	30**	2.9

Other (none listed more than 10 times)

*These items were indicated as less useful if they were not online. About 60 people indicated they did not maintain them in vertical files, or if they did, they were hard to maintain.

**Comments indicate these were useful for current awareness-not for problem solving.

The fourth set of items was designed to determine if people were familiar with the ERIC system products, their assessment of the quality of the products, and whether they desired changes, to the products. Table 4 presents evaluations of the main ERIC system products and suggestions for change.

Resources in Education (RIE) and Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) were both rated excellent. The ERIC microfiche was rated between good and excellent. Paper copy which has been used by fewer of these people received a good rating though many comments were made about the physical quality of the paper copy being lower than desired. Other items were not listed on the questionnaire and were provided by respondents. All ranked as strong goods with the exception of the microfiche index which was ranked good.

Of those responding, 156 provided suggestions for changes in ERIC system products. These are discussed in the order they were included in the questionnaire. If not on the questionnaire, they are listed in order of the number of people making suggestions.

Suggestions for modification of RIE most frequently related to (1) adding some types of information that are not covered extensively at the current time (primarily statistical data and conference proceedings), (2) providing more indexes to help manual and computer searching, (3) making replacement copies of RIE available, (4) reducing the time lag between production of a document and announcement in RIE, and (5) Level 3 concerns (pro and con).

CIJE comments were similar (See Table 4). Requests included more indexes, covering more kinds of materials, and reducing the time lag between journal dates and announcement in CIJE.

Improving the viewing quality of fiche was the most frequent comment related to microfiche; over 40 people indicated there had been improvement in quality, while others felt viewing quality was no better than it had been or worse. Elimination of envelopes was the next most frequent concern; several people were particularly upset because they felt a decision was made without checking with them for the impact on SOCs.

Comments on paper copy were primarily related to print quality and service. Many SOCs stated they had never used it, but were glad it was available.

Most comments related to indexes stressed the need for more (several types were identified) and to consider manual and online needs. The need for more and better manual searching aids was the most common request.

Comments related to the thesaurus related to the need for (1) more frequent updates and (2) simplifying and organizing it to make it easier to use. The desire for interim copies to aid searching was made by over 30 people.

Over 40 of the SOCs would like to have a system communication for intermediaries. The suggested focus would include products, schedules, search aids, publications of clearinghouses, and similar items. They felt the emphasis should be on how to use ERIC more effectively and whom to contact when they need help.

Increasing interest in CD ROM was expressed by about 50 SOCs. They would like to see a low cost version for multiple stations that would have a variety of searching procedures available.

Finally, 29 people requested the production of some good materials for training users of ERIC that could be used by college classes and groups of teachers.

TABLE 4

Evaluations of ERIC System Products
and Suggestions for Improvement

A. Indicate which of the following ERIC materials you have used and rate the general quality of the materials.

	Excellent-1 N	Good 2 N	Fair-3 N	Poor-4 N	Mean
Resources in Education (RIE)	316	69	3	0	1.2
Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)	311	65	11	2	1.2
ERIC microfiche (MF)	219	129	16	0	1.4
ERIC papercopy (PC)	49	79	24	2	1.9
Other ERIC materials (specify)					
Thesaurus	18	18	3	0	1.6
Indexes (Paper)	18	11	2	0	1.5
Indexes (MF)	3	7	5	0	2.1
Online (Services)	14	8	4	0	1.6

B. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC systems products (i.e. RIE, CIJE, MF, PC)?

166 Yes
201 No
56 Blank

C. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

Resources in Education (RIE)

N
42 Include items not included such as statistical information, conference proceedings.
36 Announce all clearinghouse products in RIE and put on MF.
33 Provide more indexes. (Annual, title, cumulative author, cumulative title).
25 Make replacement copies of monthly issues available.
24 Reduce time between production of the document and listing in RIE.
16 Include more items that are important (Level 3).
14 Eliminate items not on MF.
14 Highlight or separate items not on MF.

Table 4 (cont.)

Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)

N	
38	Provide more indexes (annual cumulative, list of journals processed).
36	Expand to include more journals, newsletters, bulletins, cover-to-cover.
36	Reduce lag time between publishing of the journal and listing in CIJE.
24	Provide microfiche for articles.
21	Improve binding of CIJE monthly issues.
20	Make replacement copies of monthly issues available.
19	Modify current coverage by eliminating journals with low circulation.
13	Provide more extensive annotations on research articles.

Microfiche

N	
48	Improve viewing quality of fiche.
43	Provide with envelopes.
22	Improve service on orders.
16	Maintain fiche frames all one direction.
16	Provide with colored envelopes or headers to indicate year.

Paper Copy

N	
49	Improve quality.
23	Improve service on orders.

Indexes

N	
39	Provide indexes to help manual searchers.
24	Provide the microfiche indexes in paper.
23	More cumulative indexes (author, title, identifier, subject).
22	Provide CIJE indexes like RIE.

Thesaurus

N	
49	Update more frequently, provide interim issues.
25	Organize differently - more heads and subheads, simplify.
24	Improve indexing structure.

ERIC System Communication to SOCs (Publication)

N	
42	Produce a monthly or quarterly product announcement that is system wide (What happened to Interchange?)

ERIC CD ROM Product

N	
51	Produce low cost materials for ERIC on CD ROM.

Training/Instructional Materials on ERIC

N	
29	Produce some good materials for use with college classes and teacher groups (Material for about a class period).

Table 5 presents information on the most recent use of ERIC materials. It is obvious that most of the people responding for the SOCs use ERIC frequently. Eighty-nine of the people responding indicated they used it within the past day and most of them indicated they used it everyday. Most of the colleges and university libraries indicated very frequent use (daily, several times a week, etc.).

TABLE 5
Most Recent Use of ERIC
by Respondents

When did you last use ERIC materials? Check the most recent time.

N	
356*	within the past 3 months
9	within the past 6 months
2	within the past 12 months
56	blank

*89 indicated use within the past day
22 indicated use within the last week

Table 6 presents information on the use of clearinghouse products by SOCs. Seventy-two percent of the "Nos" indicated they did not personally use clearinghouse products, but that their clients did. From the data and comments presented, as well as phone interviews, it is obvious that many SOCs either do not use clearinghouse products extensively or don't know if they are used. Means for all clearinghouse products were between good and excellent; those people who did use the products indicated they felt the products were useful. Newsletters, bibliographies, and monographs were the items most frequently used.

Sixty-seven people provided suggestions regarding clearinghouse products. The suggestions with most support were placing all clearinghouse products in RIE and highlighting them in some way annually in RIE so users can locate them easier. Other requests were for more items in depth (with fewer short items), more products and more contact with users regarding what is needed.

Over 120 people had suggestions for changes in ERIC clearinghouse services. Providing more assistance, making clearinghouses more accessible (800 number), and making contacts with SOCs through workshops, phone calls, and visits were frequent recommendations. People also wanted clarification regarding what assistance clearinghouses could provide.

TABLE 6

Use and Evaluation of Clearinghouse Products and Services by SOCs

A. Have you used any ERIC Clearinghouse products?

249	Yes
105	No
14	Not sure

B. Which of the following ERIC Clearinghouse products have you used? Check all that apply and rate the general quality of each.

Total		Excellent-1	Good-2	Fair-3	Poor-4	Mean
204	Newsletters	66	120	17	1	1.8
105	Digests	38	59	8	0	1.7
209	Bibliographies	102	94	13	0	1.6
106	Research reviews	54	47	5	0	1.5
73	Directories	32	37	4	0	1.6
126	Monographs (various topics)	58	64	4	0	1.6
92	Journal articles	53	36	3	1	1.5
30	Workshops	19	10	1	0	1.4

*About 80 users, (primarily colleges and university libraries), indicated they placed materials in files or distributed them, but did not catalog them unless they were monographs, research reviews, directories, or substantial bibliographies. Hence, they made little use of smaller publications. Several people (about 30) indicated Clearinghouse materials went to another office.

C. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC Clearinghouse products (i.e., newsletters, bibliographies, research reviews, journal articles, monographs, digests, etc.).

67	Yes
194	No
162	Blank

D. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

N	
21	Place all clearinghouse items in RIE and on MF.
20	Highlight clearinghouse products in RIE.
20	More topical items, not broad but with depth (fewer digests, bulletins)
20	More clearinghouse products.
19	More consultation between clearinghouses, states and local schools for needed products.
20	More publicity for clearinghouse products.
14	Article reprint service.
13	Central order facility for all clearinghouse products.
13	Annual listing of all clearinghouse items in one catalog or directory.

Table 6 (cont.)

E. Do you recommend changes in ERIC Clearinghouse services (question answering, mailing list, ERIC presentations, etc.)?

123	Yes
214	No
86	Blank

F. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

N	
50	Publish a list of contact people who can be called for information and searching assistance at each clearinghouse.
45	Establish 800 numbers to call.
45	More frequent contact with SOCs to update changes, identify needs, etc.
44	More workshops on use of ERIC for end users (College, Universities, Schools).
44	More workshops on use of ERIC for intermediaries.
36	Clarify what clearinghouses can do free.
32	Fewer mailings of small items, fliers.
29	Produce more searches and update searches that have been done.
28	Add more people to free mailing lists.
27	Conduct workshops and include intermediaries and local school personnel as presenters.

Table 7 presents information regarding what users felt they knew about the system, whether they felt there ought to be changes in the system, and changes that were desired. Over half the people responding felt they had good knowledge of the ERIC system; about 75% of these people did not recommend any changes or additions, while about 25% did.

The previous question on clearinghouses indicated the SOCs wanted more assistance from clearinghouses. They also want more system assistance and an identified site (person) to contact for assistance. They also would like one site to assist them with orders for ERIC materials and to help handle problems. They also desired an 800 number to call, especially if they had an ERIC problem. ("There are many government 800 numbers for things that are not nearly as important." "We could give much better service if we could call when we need help.") Providing more information regarding the ERIC system and clarifying the help available from clearinghouses were other requests.

TABLE 7

SOC Recommendations for Changes or
Additions for the Organization
of the ERIC System

A. Do you have knowledge of the organizatin of the ERIC system? Check the appropriate space.

207 Good Knowledge 161 Some Knowledge 16 Little/No Knowledge 39 Blank

B. If you checked good knowledge do you recommend changes or additions in the organization of the ERIC system?

71	Yes	Note: Number exceeds 207, some people who stated some knowledge also checked a response.
151	No	
5	Blank	

C. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

N	
51	Central request site for information about the system, search problems, schedules, products, vendors, etc.
49	Central request site for ordering ERIC system products and handling problems (Should be able to accept phone orders by SOCs).
40	800 number(s) to call for assistance on system problems.
27	Central ERIC liaison person to work with intermediaries ("We have some definite and different needs.").
34	Help those of us who don't know much about ERIC to learn more.
25	Clarify what clearinghouses are suppose to provide free and how much help they can give to the field.
12	System wide Advisory Board of Users; represent different types of users.
11	More emphasis on higher education instructional materials, curricula, practices, and administration.

Table 8 presents information regarding the extent to which the SOCs had ordered microfiche or paper copy and whether they had recommendations regarding the procedures for obtaining items. About 60% indicated they had ordered materials. Of these, 85 people had various comments. The most frequent request was for faster service (and publishing the expected processing time in RIE). The second most frequent request was to continue using envelopes for microfiche.

Many people (over 30) indicated they were pleased to have the microfiche service for RIE and would like to have a similar program for CIJE. The cost of obtaining copies of journal articles is considered high. Procedures for obtaining copies of journal articles can also be slow.

TABLE 8

Use and Recommended Changes
for Ordering MF and
Paper Copy from EDRS

A. Have you ordered microfiche or hardcopy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service?

262	Yes
130	No
31	Blank

B. If yes, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining microfiche or papercopy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service?

85	Yes
152	No
31	Blank

C. If yes, what changes do you recommend?

N	
35	Faster Service if possible (Publish expected time to process orders in RIE).
31	Continue to include envelopes with MF.
25	Accept phone orders from SOCs.
12	Provide order forms to SOCs with fiche.

Table 9 presents information regarding searching the ERIC database. Nearly all the SOC responders had searched the ERIC database. The two most common ways of searching for these people were searching online and manually themselves. The second most common ways were also searching online and manually themselves. The person who searches online most frequently usually searches manually second most frequently. The reverse is also the case. There is still a considerable amount of manual searching of the ERIC database.

The most frequent requests regarding searching were to (1) lower the online costs, (2) produce a low cost CD ROM, (3) establish a service that could give assistance, (4) produce manual searching aids, (5) provide more online training for searches by people who know what works, and (6) provide structured search models for common searches.

TABLE 9

Use and Recommended Changes in
Search Procedures by SOCs

A. Have you requested or done a search of the ERIC database?

373	Yes
24	No
26	Blank

B. How do you generally access ERIC materials? Check the two most frequent ways: 1 most frequent, 2 second most frequent.*

First N	Second N	
189	105	I search ERIC manually myself.
202	63	I search ERIC online myself.
22	18	I have another person onsite search ERIC manually.
22	43	I have another person onsite search ERIC online.
40	18	I use an ERIC search service at a university, college, or school to search ERIC.
4	17	I use an ERIC search service other than at a university, college or school to search ERIC.

*Note: Several people marked only 1s; hence, 1s exceed 307 while there are fewer 2s.

C. If yes, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining ERIC searches?

106	Yes
253	No
14	Blank

D. If yes, what changes do you recommend?

N	
43	ERIC should have costs of online searching lowered.
40	ERIC should produce materials for low cost CD ROM.
40	ERIC should have an 800 number(s) to call for searching assistance-prefer calling people who know topics and search strategy.
36	ERIC should produce some simple helps for manual searching. (Coordinated term postings, special indexes, etc.).
35	ERIC should provide more training for online searching (What works for specific topics, subjects, etc.).
33	ERIC should provide online structured searches for people to use.
27	Improve indexing for searching hard to get broad (and narrow) topics manually. Hard to pick terms for online searching (especially narrow topics).

TABLE 9 (cont.)

16	Develop CD ROM for multiple stations, not one.
16	Develop better procedures for identifying statistical data.
12	Develop better procedures to identify publication types by school level.

Table 10 presents a listing of ways the SOCs felt the ERIC system had been most helpful to them or their organization. A total of 333 people provided some written response. Responses were grouped into six categories for analysis.

Category one focused on the content of the information used and found to be helpful. The most frequent response was the use of research materials. The following items were curriculum materials and instructional materials; these were identified most frequently by school districts and state departments of education.

The second category was a listing of ERIC products and services. The microfiche (MF) availability was the most praised item (even though some people had quality problems). The immediate information available through the microfiche is considered by many people to be an outstanding service. Online searching helped several SOCs make ERIC more useful to their clients. The database itself was identified by over 50 people.

The third category of responses related to features of the information or system. The most frequent comments related to the inclusion of fugitive materials, the amount of information available, and the depth of information available. ERIC clearly was viewed by many of these people as providing a unique and important service. Several people commented on their experience in finding "about 95% of what I need in ERIC." Providing current and recent information was considered a useful service of ERIC.

The category that received the most response was the identification of who had been helped by ERIC. The responses in this category were not surprising because the majority of the respondents were from colleges and universities. Graduate students were identified most frequently, followed by students (in general) and faculty. Other groups identified included elementary and secondary school teachers, administrators, and staff of State Departments of Education.

The fifth category related to comments on how information from ERIC was used. Designing research and reporting research (writing) were the most frequently listed uses. The next most frequently cited uses were for instruction and curriculum. Also checked were policy development, planning and administration; these were listed most frequently by school districts and state departments of education. Using ERIC for developing proposals and reviewing proposals was reported by a variety of agencies and organizations.

TABLE 10

Usefulness of ERIC to SOCs
or Their Organization

How has the ERIC system been most helpful to you or your organization?

1. Content of Information Used.

N	
110	Research
47	Curriculum Materials
44	Instructional Materials
50	Other (No item more than six)

2. ERIC Product or Service Praised.

N	
39	MF
27	Online Searching
24	RIE
21	Total database
18	CIJE
16	Indexes
40	Other (No item more than seven)

3. Useful Feature of Information or System.

N	
81	Contains fugitive, normally difficult to obtain items.
53	Amount and extent of information
38	MF materials provide immediate information
36	Current, recent information available
39	Low cost
31	Retrospective information available
20	Easy to search
17	Locate information fast
14	Well organized

4. Persons Using Information.

N	
113	Graduate students
75	Faculty (College and University)
66	Students (unidentified)
49	Undergraduate students
37	Teachers (Elementary and Secondary)
30	Administrators (all levels)
19	State Department of Education Staff
35	Others (none more than six)

TABLE 10 (cont.)

5. Use of Information

N	
79	Research (design, reports)
40	Instruction (practice)
38	Curriculum and course development
20	Policy development
18	Planning
18	Proposals
14	Administration
35	Other (no item more than five)

Table 11 presents a listing of problems people reported on the open response item. In general these responses are similar to items reported in other sections. The most frequent comment was "none." The second most frequent comment was a problem identified several times--the lag time between receipt of various items (MF, RIE, CIJE) and when the database goes online. Several SOCs have problems when they do not have all items available. Rising costs were identified as before; these costs related primarily to searching, costs of indexes, and costs of CIJE. About 45 people made comments on difficulties in learning the system, searching, and doing manual searches.

Several people indicated increasing use of ERIC was presenting staffing and cost problems to them; they were very concerned about more search aids, lower cost searching, and more prepared products by clearinghouses.

TABLE 11

Problems of ERIC
Identified by SOCs

What problems have you had in using the ERIC system?

N	
113	None
21	Time lags between/among when materials are received and RIE and CIJE go online (MF, CIJE, RIE)
20	Costs
19	Hard to learn to use
16	Indexing/Searching problems
15	Manual searching difficult
14	Size (storage and use)
14	Increasing use
14	Few or minimal
31	Other (no items listed more than six times)

SURVEY OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Sample Description

A random sample (Group A) of 50 administrators, 75 secondary school teachers/librarians and 75 elementary school teachers/librarians was selected from a list of 2,800 schools (a stratified random sample of schools). In addition a random sample (Group B) of 10 administrators, 20 secondary school teachers/librarians and 20 elementary school teachers/librarians was selected from Ohio. Responses were received from 201 individuals. Responses were approximately proportional for each group surveyed.

Data Collection

A questionnaire and a stamped return envelope were mailed to each of the sample sites. Follow-up cards were sent to approximately 120 sites in August. Approximately 30 phone calls were made to clarify comments on the forms and to obtain additional information.

Report and Analysis of Data

Problems of Users for Which a Service Such as ERIC Can Provide Assistance

Table 12 presents data obtained from these samples. The response patterns were similar to those of the SOCs; however, use of the service for curriculum. instructional materials, instruction, and administration purposes were higher (approximately 80% indicated these items). Designing research, writing a speech, and developing legislation were lower (all below 30%).

TABLE 12

Problems of Users
as Identified by Teachers and Administrators

What are the major problems of your school for which a service such as ERIC can provide assistance?

Number	%	
178	89	Developing/improving curricula
175	87	Developing/improving instructional materials
175	87	Developing/improving instruction
165	82	Developing/improving administration
122	61	Developing/improving facilities
106	53	Developing/improving policies and standards
103	51	Developing/improving community relations
61	30	Designing research
142	71	Using research to improve practice
41	20	Writing a speech
36	18	Developing legislation
111	55	Providing awareness/access to research to others
174	87	Providing awareness/access to curriculum materials to others
175	87	Providing awareness/access to instructional materials
86	43	Others*
31	15	Term papers
14	7	Proposals

*Only items with 10 or more responses are listed.

Information Services Desired

Table 13 presents responses related to this question. Highest items were specific searches on request (60%), copies of instructional materials (56%), copies of curriculum guides (45%), analyses and interpretation of research or practice (40%), and telephone or direct contacts with information specialists (30%). Requests for research reports and statistical data were under 20%.

TABLE 13

Information Services
Desired by Teachers and Administrators

Please check the three information services which would be most useful, if available, for solving your problems.

Number	%	
121	60	Specific searches of the literature on request
80	40	Analysis and interpretation of research or practice
55	27	Routine mailing of current information
60	30	Telephone or other direct contacts with information specialists
113	56	Copies of instructional materials
90	45	Copies of curriculum guides
35	17	Copies of research reports
22	11	Copies of statistical data
65	32	Other
37	18	Indexes
15	7	Conference Proceedings

Usefulness of Information Products for Solving Problems

Table 14 presents data related to this question. Items ranked as most desirable were journals, instructional materials and curriculum guides. All items were rated better than 2.7 on a 1-5 scale (with 1.0 being useful); abstracts, bibliographies, and indexes were rated lowest with means of 2.7.

Comments indicated school personnel were generally looking for materials they could use directly. Over 40, primarily administrators, librarians, and department heads, indicated they would like a decision-making database (rather than the way information is usually reviewed and synthesized).

TABLE 14

Usefulness of Information Products
for Solving Problems
for Teachers and Administrators

How useful are each of the following types of information products for solving your problems?

	1 Useful	2	3	4 Not	5 Useful	Mean
Bibliographies and indexes. . .	32	41	63	47	3	2.7
Abstracts	31	45	62	31	13	2.7
Journals and magazines.	109	65	23	2	1	1.6
Newsletters (topical)	69	76	33	11	5	2.0
Review and synthesis of research or practice.	45	67	38	41	5	2.3
Instructional materials	95	64	20	11	3	1.8
Curriculum guides	81	76	30	9	3	1.9
Digests (short summaries of research and practice).	52	64	39	21	5	2.0
Newsletters (informational) . .	45	81	62	11	3	2.2

Other (none listed more than 10 times)

Use and Evaluation of ERIC Products

Table 15 presents data related to this topic. These questions were designed to assess familiarity with ERIC system products and evaluation of the items. School personnel were not as familiar with ERIC as were the SOCs. Forty percent of the sample indicated knowledge of ERIC. Data from the survey and phone calls to a sample of 40 indicated those familiar with ERIC were more likely to (1) be administrators, department heads, or librarians, (2) have a higher level of education (M.A., M.S., Ed.D., or Ph.D.), (3) have attended a college or university with an ERIC collection, and (4) be located in an urban or suburban area.

Evaluations of RIE and CIJE were similar to the SOCs; the materials were rated excellent. Microfiche ratings were lower with a mean of 2.0. Paper copy received a mean rating of 2.3.

Changes recommended in products by 10 or more people were (1) make materials (RIE, CIJE, MF) more accessible, (2) make materials available at lower cost, (3) reduce lag time between journal publication and listing in CIJE, (4) get more local and state materials into RIE, (5) improve the quality (viewing quality and reproduction capability) of fiche and (6) include more items such as more state journals and newsletters.

TABLE 15

Evaluations of ERIC System Products
and Suggestions for Improvement

A. Indicate which of the following ERIC materials you have used and rate the general quality of the materials.

	Excellent-1	Good-2	Fair-3	Poor-4	Mean
Resources in Education (RIE)	60	15	3	1	1.2
Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)	45	32	4	2	1.6
ERIC microfiche (MF)	15	39	11	3	2.0
ERIC papercopy (PC)	8	11	16	1	2.3
Other ERIC materials (specify)					
Thesaurus	5	11	5	0	2.0
Indexes (Paper)	3	5	2	0	1.9
Online (Services)	7	6	2	0	1.7

B. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC systems products (i.e. RIE, CIJE, MF, PC)?

61 Yes
12 No
10 Blank

C. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

Resources in Education (RIE)

N
19 Include more items from local schools and states
14 Announce all clearinghouse products in RIE and put on MF.
11 Reduce time between production of the document and listing in RIE.
9 Include more items that are important (Level 3).
8 Highlight or separate items not on MF.

Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)

N
19 Expand to include more journals, newsletters, and bulletins; include more state items.
9 Reduce lag time between publishing of the journal and listing in CIJE.

Microfiche

N
14 Improve viewing quality of fiche.

Paper Copy

N
11 Improve quality.

Indexes

N	
19	Provide indexes to help manual searchers.

Thesaurus

N	
12	Update more frequently, provide interim issues.
11	Organize differently - more heads and subheads, simplify
10	Improve indexing structure.

ERIC CD ROM Product

N	
14	Produce low cost materials for ERIC on CD ROM.

Most Recent Use of ERIC

About 40 percent of the sample indicated they had used ERIC. Most had used ERIC within the past six months, closely followed by within the past 12 months. Telephone calls to some non-responders did not identify any who had used ERIC. Hence, the actual percent of teachers and administrators who have used ERIC probably is closer to 30%.

Over 40 people made comments to indicate their uses were (1) for academic work, (2) to identify curriculum materials and instructional materials, (3) for research, (4) to improve practice (administration and classroom), (5) to identify trends, and (6) to assist in making decisions.

TABLE 16

Most Recent Use of ERIC
by Teachers and Administrators

When did you last use ERIC materials? Check the most recent time.

N	
12	within the past 3 months
36	within the past 6 months
31	within the past 12 months
4	blank

Use and Evaluation of CH Products

About 24 percent of the people responding had used clearinghouse products. Items used the most were newsletters, bibliographies, and monographs. Evaluation of newsletters was substantially higher for school personnel than for the SOCs. Evaluation of other items was very similar, between good and excellent.

Most of the people who had used clearinghouse products made comments on things desired (a much higher percentage than for the SOC sample.) Most frequent comments included the following: (1) more free items to be sent to schools; (2) produce materials more frequently; (3) produce more items related to current needs; (4) announce the availability of materials more widely; (5) involve more state and local groups in identifying publications to produce; (6) update some previous publications that were useful, but now are dated, (7) develop more listings of available curriculum materials and instructional materials and (8) develop more products on the pro's and con's of educational practices and materials.

TABLE 17

Use and Evaluation of Clearinghouse
Products and Services by Teachers and Administrators

A. Have you used any ERIC Clearinghouse products?

48	Yes
21	No
14	Not sure

B. Which of the following ERIC Clearinghouse products have you used? Check all that apply and rate the general quality of each.

Total		Excellent-1	Good-2	Fair-3	Poor-4	Mean
39	Newsletters	16	20	3	0	1.7
13	Digests	4	7	2	0	1.8
22	Bibliographies	8	13	1	0	1.7
13	Research reviews	4	8	1	0	1.8
11	Directories	3	7	1	0	1.8
22	Monographs (various topics)	11	9	2	0	1.6
11	Journal articles	5	5	1	0	1.6
5	Workshops	2	3	0	0	1.6

C. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC Clearinghouse products (i.e., newsletters, bibliographies, research reviews, journal articles, monographs, digests, etc.)?

39	Yes
42	No
122	Blank

D. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

N	
20	More materials designed to help make decisions.
19	More free items for schools.
19	More practical materials that a classroom teacher can use.
11	More consultation between clearinghouses, states and local schools for needed products.
11	More publicity for clearinghouse products.

E. Do you recommend changes in ERIC Clearinghouse services (question answering, mailing list, ERIC presentations, etc.)?

36	Yes
43	No
122	Blank

F. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

N	
23	Publish a list of contact people who can be called for information and searching assistance at each clearinghouse.
22	Clarify what clearinghouses can do free.
19	Establish 800 numbers to call.
19	Produce more searches and update searches that have been done.
16	More workshops on use of ERIC for end users (College, Universities, Schools).
15	Add more people to free mailing lists.

The number one request of these people for change in services was similar to the SOCs--publish and widely distribute a list of contact people and indicate what they are able to offer in assistance. The second most frequent request was to clarify what clearinghouses can do (especially for no charge). Other comments by 10 or more people included (1) make materials available for no charge or lower cost, (2) add more people to mailing lists, (3) provide more outreach to let people know what's available, (4) conduct more workshops on how to use ERIC effectively, (5) establish 800 number(s) to call, (6) work with college and school librarians to help them use ERIC more effectively, and (7) make materials available more frequently.

Changes in Organization of the ERIC System

Very few of this sample believed they had a good knowledge of ERIC. Of those that did and did not, about 20% of the sample made comments. The comments received were similar to those of the SOCs. The most frequent request was for a well publicized place to call for assistance. The second most frequent comment was for more emphasis on outreach--assisting people in using ERIC; they were not sure how this should be done. The third most frequent comment was to establish more direct links to each of the states and major school districts; there was a desire for a person or office in each state as an identified ERIC link.

TABLE 18

Teacher and Administrator
Recommendations for Changes or
Additions for the Organization
of the ERIC System

A. Do you have knowledge of the organization of the ERIC system? Check the appropriate space.

32 Good Knowledge 33 Some Knowledge 121 Little/No Knowledge 15 Blank

B. If you checked good knowledge do you recommend changes or additions in the organization of the ERIC system?

37	Yes	NOTE: Number exceeds 32, some people who stated some knowledge also checked a response.
151	No	
15	Blank	

C. If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

N	
24	Central request site for information about the system, search problems, schedules, products, vendors, etc.
23	800 number(s) to call for assistance on system problems.
22	Help those of us who don't know much about ERIC to learn more.
18	Clarify what clearinghouses are suppose to provide free and how much help they can give to the field.
12	More emphasis on instructional materials, curricula, practices, and administration.

Use and Recommended Changes for Ordering MF and Paper Copy

Very few of the responders had ordered either microfiche or paper copy. Those who had were split nearly evenly between orders for MF and paper copy. The main request was to be able to phone for an order.

Use and Recommended Changes in Search Procedures

Nearly all the sample who were familiar with ERIC had searched ERIC. The most common response was that they searched ERIC manually themselves. The next most common response was the use of a search service (intermediary) to search ERIC online.

Nearly all the people who had searched ERIC had suggestions for changes. The most frequent request was to lower the cost of online searching. The second most frequent request was for a listing in RIE or CIJE where people could get help (state office, clearinghouses, or?). The third most frequent request was to have some materials that would help people do manual searches ("Minor terms are not listed in RIE or CIJE." "Can you put more prepared searches in RIE?" "Can you update bibliographies more frequently?" "Can you put good searches on hot topics in RIE and faster?")

TABLE 19

Use and Recommended Changes in
Search Procedures by Teachers and Administrators

A. Have you requested or done a search of the ERIC database?

79	Yes
121	No
1	Blank

B. How do you generally access ERIC materials? Check the two most frequent ways: 1 most frequent, 2 second most frequent.

First N	Second N	
42	31	I search ERIC manually myself.
1	3	I search ERIC online myself.
5	14	I have another person onsite search ERIC manually.
4	3	I have another person onsite search ERIC online.
19	25	I use an ERIC search service at a university, college, or school to search ERIC.
0	0	I use an ERIC search service other than at a university, college or school to search ERIC.

C. If yes, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining ERIC searches?

74	Yes
116	No
11	Blank

D. If yes, what changes do you recommend?

N	
27	ERIC should have costs of online searching lowered.
22	ERIC should have an 800 number(s) to call for searching assistance-prefer calling people who know topics and search strategy.
21	ERIC should produce some simple helps for manual searching. (Coordinated term postings, special indexes, etc.).
14	ERIC should produce materials for low cost CD ROM.
13	Improve indexing for searching hard to get broad (and narrow) topics manually. Hard to pick terms for online searching (especially narrow topics).
11	ERIC should provide more training for online searching (What works for specific topics, subjects, etc.).

Usefulness of ERIC

Approximately 30 percent of the sample provided statements about how ERIC had been most useful to them. Statements were grouped into six categories as for the SOCs.

a. Content of Information Used

The material cited most frequently was research. The next most frequently identified materials were (1) descriptions of practice and (2) instructional materials. Curriculum guides ranked fourth.

b. ERIC Product or Service Praised

Availability of microfiche was stated most frequently. RIE was mentioned next most frequently. Assistance from clearinghouses and the total database were next in praise.

c. Useful Feature of Information or System

The most frequent responses included (1) amount and extent of information, (2) MF, (3) current and recent information and (4) low cost.

d. Persons Using Information

The persons identified as using the information most frequently were teachers followed by administrators.

e. Use of Information

The most common use of ERIC cited was for academic work (research, papers, reports). The second most common use was to improve practice. Other uses identified by 10 or more people were administration, planning, and curriculum or program development.

TABLE 20

Usefulness of ERIC to Teachers and Administrators or Their Schools

How has the ERIC system been most helpful to you or your school?

1. Content of Information Used.

N	
45	Research
41	Descriptions of practice
40	Instructional materials
33	Curriculum materials
20	Other (No item more than eight)

2. ERIC Product or Service Praised.

N	
21	MF
18	RIE
14	Total database
14	Clearinghouse products and assistance
11	CIJE
11	Online searching
14	Other (No item more than four)

3. Useful Feature of Information of System.

N	
29	Amount and extent of information
28	MF materials provide immediate information
27	Current, recent information available
16	Low cost
31	Other (No item more than seven)

4. Persons Using Information.

N	
54	Teachers (elementary and secondary)
21	Administrators (all levels)
14	Others (None more than six)

5. Use of Information

N	
31	Research (design, reports)
29	Instruction (practice)
26	Administration
24	Curriculum and course development
22	Planning
27	Other (no item more than eight)

Problems Related to the Use of ERIC

The percentage of the sample indicating problems with ERIC was higher than for the SOCs.

Problem number one was difficulty in using the system (time, search terms, indexes). Problem number two was related to number one--difficult to learn to use the system effectively (takes time to learn terms; the occasional user should be able to get help rather than learning to use the system, takes time to learn the best way to access the system for specific materials, don't know what aids are available to help to do searches). Problem number three was related to both the previous problems--difficulties of doing manual searches. Problem four related to lack of information about materials available through ERIC and whom to contact for what; several people did not know what help they could get beyond the libraries where they found ERIC microfiche collections.

TABLE 21

Problems of ERIC
Identified by Teachers and Administrators

What problems have you had in using the ERIC system?

N	
24	Hard to learn to use
19	Indexing/Searching problems
18	Manual searching difficult
14	None
13	Costs
12	Lack of information about how to use the system
10	Convenience
15	Other (No items listed more than six times)

Summary and User Recommendations

ERIC is clearly serving and working with some very distinct audiences. The SOCs represent a variety of different organizations and institutions with some similar, but also some very different information needs. The teachers and administrators surveyed indicated some common information needs, but also different information needs.

Both surveys indicated strong needs for information related to improving practices, improving curricula, improving instruction, and improving administration. Copies of research reports, instructional materials, and curriculum guides (these are available through ERIC) are desired as are copies of statistical data that are frequently not available through ERIC at the current time. Responders interested in statistical data were state departments of education, large colleges and universities, research organizations, search services, and large school districts.

About 50 percent of the individuals in both groups surveyed desired specific searches of the literature on request and analyses and interpretation of research or practice. Several responders indicated they desired analyses and interpretative reports that were more evaluative and had more depth than what they had obtained in the past.

About 40 percent of both groups indicated they would like to have assistance from information specialists. Additional comments made by many people indicated they would like to be able to talk with someone who knew the content or topic area and the system.

Mailings of current information were considered among the three most useful types of information by about 30 percent of the SOCs, while over 20 percent found them much less useful than others. About 30 percent of the schools indicated current information (especially materials produced for specific topics or problems) to be among their three most used types of information.

Ratings of the usefulness of types of information products, while showing some commonalities, also showed some important differences. SOCs at many college and university libraries and online services indicated less usefulness for newsletters and digests unless they were in the database and on microfiche.

ERIC system products were all rated from good to excellent by SOCs and generally good to excellent by teachers and administrators. Specific changes, additions, deletions, or modifications desired for each of the products were considered in the survey discussions. While fiche are generally rated good and considered very valuable, improving fiche quality was a high priority for many users. There is also considerable interest in a low cost CD ROM ERIC collection, more search aids, and more materials produced by states and schools.

A large number of SOCs (about 30 percent of those responding) do not use ERIC clearinghouse products, except as they are obtained through searches and available in microfiche. Of those SOCs who use the materials, ratings of ERIC clearinghouse products range from good to excellent. Ratings by school personnel were similar.

This use or lack of use of mailed items by many SOCs and the desire for some system wide communication suggests the need to review current system policies; some mailings to SOCs could be optional resulting in some savings that could be used to produce a system wide publication for SOCs, state departments, and others.

Both groups surveyed clearly desire some modifications in clearinghouse services. The three most frequent requests are (1) for identified people at each clearinghouse to give assistance, (2) establish one or more 800 telephone numbers for calls, and (3) to increase outreach through workshops, publicity, and personal contact. These requests have program and budget implications and several people responding made priority comments. A typical comment was "Give first priority to maintaining and improving the database, but assistance and outreach will increase the use, improve the quality of what is obtained, and improve the use of the information."

The recommendation received from about 20 percent of the SOCs and some schools was to establish a central contact point for general questions, problems, and orders regarding ERIC. There is a continuing and growing need for a number/office people can contact in addition to separate clearinghouses and vendors. Several people felt that having such an office would also provide additional input on user needs and problems. Clarification regarding services available from clearinghouses was desired by many SOCs and schools ("It's hard to know what should be changed if you're not sure what they should be doing and providing.") The only content or topic area emphasized for additional emphasis by 10 or more SOCs was higher education (requests were from colleges and universities). No content or topic area was identified for additional emphasis by more than five schools.

A large majority of the people responding for the SOCs had searched ERIC and over 30 percent of the school personnel responding had searched ERIC. Recommendations for change regarding searching were very similar. A substantial number of both groups felt that costs of searching online should be lowered, that aids for manual searching should be available, and that contact people should be available for assisting with searches. Over 30 of the SOCs and several schools also felt low cost CD ROM materials would be very helpful.

Both surveys documented ways people believed ERIC had been helpful to them, content of information used, useful features of the information, persons using the information, and use of the information. The data indicate ERIC is widely used at SOC locations and by schools and colleges closely related with these SOC locations. Data also suggest that ERIC is more widely used when assistance is provided by a SOC or other agency (SMERC, State of New York, etc.) to user groups on a contract or other basis.

Many organizations and sites purchase CIJE or RIE and do not obtain microfiche or other ERIC tools. Some of these organizations were in the school random sample or were sites used by the responders in the sample. These people frequently depend on the SOC sites.

The helpful aspect of ERIC from the SOCs perspective is, therefore, somewhat different than the helpful aspect of ERIC from the point of view of end users who do not have microfiche collections, do not have search capability, or do not have ERIC tools. Some of the ways the end users view ERIC as being helpful is due to the SOCs. If the SOCs were not there, the end users would have substantially more problems with ERIC; in fact, as several SOCs stated "ERIC would not be used in our area if we were not here."

How various people view ERIC as being helpful to them is important. Most of the SOCs viewed the database, system services, and online services as being most helpful. Some of the SOCs also identified clearinghouse and clearinghouse products as being among the most helpful part of ERIC; these SOCs were usually schools or state departments of education.

School personnel also identified the database, online services and clearinghouse products and clearinghouse contacts as helpful. The user (school personnel in these cases) frequently was seeking help for a specific problem and appreciated being able to get assistance from someone who knew their area of concern, especially if they got help in addition to what might be in a search.

The surveys identified things people value about ERIC, and identified problems people have with the ERIC system and products. Many of these problems are not new; they have been identifed in other reports including a 1972 report by COED to Central ERIC. Some are new or have changed in scope or intensity. While people made suggestions for modifications, many also expressed concern as stated by combined statements from two people. "...The present system should be handled with care and not violated or destroyed. ERIC is very good at what it was created to do. In your deliberations do not make ERIC ineffectual or destroy it. Please keep in mind that no substitute exists. Researchers (and school personnel) have become more dependent upon ERIC than ever before. Please handle the system with care. The system works extremely well (for those who know how to use it) as it is."

Another comment voiced the opinions of many. "As you consider modifying the ERIC organization, products, and functions, do not destroy the strong points of the system. You should be considering some of these items: What can you do once, that would have to be done by all the states, or thousands of teachers, administrators, and librarians?; You know the database better than others; can you do more with it to save others time or do things with it that others will not do?; What can you do to get more people to use ERIC and to use it better?; What can you do to help libraries with microfiche collections provide better service?; and What can you do to make ERIC easier to use?"

Recommended modifications of the ERIC system focused on several concerns. These included the following:

1. Providing a central office (phone number) that can be widely publicized for answering general questions about ERIC, assisting with ordering, assisting with problems, and that would coordinate information about ERIC (including clearinghouse functions).

2. Providing more assistance with searching, use of ERIC, educational questions, and how to obtain information on a specific topic or problem.

3. Providing more aids (indexes) for searching ERIC.

4. Developing products that synthesize, narrow, and illuminate the database. (ERIC clearinghouse product priorities).

5. Providing a computer searchable database at low cost and/or that can be adapted to multiple stations (the basic request is to lower the cost of searching).

6. Developing a menu for searching ERIC for CD ROM with search strategies programmed in the software for common searches.

7. Increasing outreach to work with SOCs, states, and other major intermediaries. Producing products and services to help them work with end users. Forming an Intermediary ERIC Advisory Board.

8. Increasing outreach to work with colleges, universities, and schools on the use of ERIC.

9. Developing training materials on the use of ERIC for colleges and universities.

10. Developing training materials on the use of ERIC for schools.

11. Providing publicized 800 telephone number(s) for providing assistance to users with people available who know the information and the system.

12. Improving the quality of microfiche and paper copy.

13. Making some modifications to RIE, CIJE, and ERIC Tools.

14. Consulting with users (states, schools, etc.) more frequently on needs, priorities, problems, etc.

15. Increasing publicity regarding ERIC and ERIC products.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SOC Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ERIC STANDING ORDER CUSTOMERS
(Sites purchasing ERIC microfiche)

Instructions

Your response to the attached questionnaire will help to provide recommendations for improvements of the ERIC system. Please read each item and respond as requested.

Name_____

Position_____

Association_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

1. What are the major problems of your users for which a service such as ERIC can provide assistance? Check all that apply.

_____ Developing/improving curricula
_____ Developing/improving instructional materials
_____ Developing/improving instruction
_____ Developing/improving administration
_____ Developing/improving facilities
_____ Developing/improving policies and standards
_____ Developing/improving community relations
_____ Designing research
_____ Using research to improve practice
_____ Writing a speech
_____ Developing legislation
_____ Providing awareness/access to research to others
_____ Providing awareness/access to curriculum materials to others
_____ Providing awareness/access to instructional materials
_____ Others (please list)

2. Please check the three information services which would be most useful, if available, for solving the problems of your users.

_____ Specific searches of the literature on request
_____ Analysis and interpretation of research or practice
_____ Routine mailing of current information
_____ Telephone or other direct contacts with information specialists
_____ Copies of instructional materials
_____ Copies of curriculum guides
_____ Copies of research reports
_____ Copies of statistical data
_____ Other

3. How useful are each of the following types of information products to your users in solving problems?

	Useful				Not Useful
Bibliographies and indexes . . .	1	2	3	4	5
Abstracts	1	2	3	4	5
Journals and magazines	1	2	3	4	5
Newsletters (topical)	1	2	3	4	5
Review and synthesis of research or practice	1	2	3	4	5
Instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum guides	1	2	3	4	5
Digests (short summaries of research and practice)	1	2	3	4	5
Newsletters (informational) . .	1	2	3	4	5

4a. Are you personally familiar with the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system?

_____ Yes
_____ No (If no, go to question 5)

4b. If you answered yes to 4a please indicate which of the following ERIC materials you have used and rate the general quality of the materials.

_____	Resources in Education (RIE)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	ERIC microfiche (MF)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	ERIC papercopy (PC)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Other ERIC materials (specify)	

4c. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC system products (i.e. RIE, CIJE, MF, PC)

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

4d. When did you last use ERIC materials? Check the most recent time.

_____ within the past 3 months _____ within the past 12 months

_____ within the past 6 months _____ other

5a. Have you used any ERIC Clearinghouse products?

_____ Yes
_____ No (If no, go to question 6)

5b. Which of the following ERIC Clearinghouse products have you used? Check all that apply and rate the general quality of each.

_____	Newsletters	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Digests	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Bibliographies	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Research reviews	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Directories	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Monographs (various topics)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Journal articles	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Other (specify)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___

5c. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC Clearinghouse products (i.e. newsletters, bibliographies, research reviews, journal articles, monographs, digests, etc.)

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

5d. Do you recommend changes in ERIC Clearinghouse services (question answering, mailing list, ERIC presentations, etc.)

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

6a. Do you have knowledge of the organization of the ERIC system? Check the appropriate space.

_____Good Knowledge _____Some Knowledge _____Little/No Knowledge

6b. If you checked good knowledge do you recommend changes or additions in the organization of the ERIC system?

_____Yes
_____No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

7a. Have you ordered microfiche or hardcopy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service?

_____ Yes
_____ No

7b. If yes to 7a, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining microfiche or papercopy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes do you recommend?

8a. Have you requested or done a search of the ERIC database?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, go to 8b. If no, go to 9.

8b. How do you generally access ERIC materials? Check the two most frequent ways: 1 most frequent, 2 second most frequent.

_____ I search ERIC manually myself.
_____ I search ERIC online myself.
_____ I have another person onsite search ERIC manually.
_____ I have another person onsite search ERIC online.
_____ I use an ERIC search service at a university, college, or school to search ERIC.
_____ I use an ERIC search service other than at a university, college or school to search ERIC.

8c. If yes, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining ERIC searches?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes do you recommend?

9. If you or your organization have used ERIC, please respond to 9a and 9b.

9a. How has the ERIC system been most helpful to you or your organization?

9b. What problems have you had in using the ERIC system?

APPENDIX B
Letter to SOCs

TO: ERIC Standing Order Customers

FROM: Dr. Garry Walz, Chair
Council of ERIC Directors

Dr. Robert W. Howe, Coordinator
ERIC User Survey

Robert W. Howe
July 7, 1986

RE: Study of ERIC

The U.S. Department of Education is conducting a study of the ERIC system, products, and services. As a part of this study we are contacting a sample of ERIC users to obtain their ideas about ERIC including satisfaction or dissatisfaction and recommendations for continuing or changing practices, products and services. A similar survey was conducted in the early 1970's and was very useful for making decisions regarding the future of the system.

We are requesting your cooperation in completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the enclosed envelope within the next two weeks. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Dr. Robert W. Howe, ERIC/SMEAC, 1200 Chambers Road, Room 310, Columbus, OH 43212 or call 614-422-6717.

GW:RWH;lss
Enclosure

APPENDIX C
Teacher and Administrator
Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SAMPLE OF TEACHERS,
ADMINISTRATORS AND LIBRARIANS

Instructions

Your response to the attached questionnaire will help to provide recommendations for improvements of the ERIC system. Please read each item and respond as requested.

Name_____

Position_____

Association_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

1. What are your major problems for which a service such as ERIC can provide assistance? Check all that apply.

_____ Developing/improving curricula
_____ Developing/improving instructional materials
_____ Developing/improving instruction
_____ Developing/improving administration
_____ Developing/improving facilities
_____ Developing/improving policies and standards
_____ Developing/improving community relations
_____ Designing research
_____ Using research to improve practice
_____ Writing a speech
_____ Developing legislation
_____ Providing awareness/access to research to others
_____ Providing awareness/access to curriculum materials to others
_____ Providing awareness/access to instructional materials
_____ Others (please list)

2. Please check the three information services which would be most useful, if available, for solving your problems.

_____ Specific searches of the literature on request
_____ Analysis and interpretation of research or practice
_____ Routine mailing of current information
_____ Telephone or other direct contacts with information specialists
_____ Copies of instructional materials
_____ Copies of curriculum guides
_____ Copies of research reports
_____ Copies of statistical data
_____ Other

3. How useful are each of the following types of information products to you in solving your problems?

	Useful				Not Useful
Bibliographies and indexes . . .	1	2	3	4	5
Abstracts	1	2	3	4	5
Journals and magazines	1	2	3	4	5
Newsletters (topical)	1	2	3	4	5
Review and synthesis of research or practice	1	2	3	4	5
Instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum guides	1	2	3	4	5
Digests (short summaries of research and practice)	1	2	3	4	5
Newsletters (informational) . .	1	2	3	4	5

4a. Are you personally familiar with the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system?

_____ Yes
_____ No (If no, go to question 5)

4b. If you answered yes to 4a please indicate which of the following ERIC materials you have used and rate the general quality of the materials.

_____	Resources in Education (RIE)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	ERIC microfiche (MF)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	ERIC papercopy (PC)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Other ERIC materials (specify)	

4c. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC system products (i.e. RIE, CIJE, MF, PC)

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

4d. When did you last use ERIC materials? Check the most recent time.

_____ within the past 3 months _____ within the past 12 months

_____ within the past 6 months _____ other

5a. Have you used any ERIC Clearinghouse products?

_____ Yes
_____ No (If no, go to question 6)

5b. Which of the following ERIC Clearinghouse products have you used? Check all that apply and rate the general quality of each.

_____	Newsletters	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
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_____	Bibliographies	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Research reviews	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Directories	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Monographs (various topics)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Journal articles	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___
_____	Other (specify)	Exc___Good___Fair___Poor___

5c. Do you recommend changes or additions in ERIC Clearinghouse products (i.e. newsletters, bibliographies, research reviews, journal articles, monographs, digests, etc.)

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

5d. Do you recommend changes in ERIC Clearinghouse services (question answering, mailing list, ERIC presentations, etc.)

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

6a. Do you have knowledge of the organization of the ERIC system? Check the appropriate space.

_____Good Knowledge _____Some Knowledge _____Little/No Knowledge

6b. If you checked good knowledge do you recommend changes or additions in the organization of the ERIC system?

_____Yes
_____No

If yes, what changes or additions do you recommend?

7a. Have you ordered microfiche or hardcopy from the ERIC Document *Reproduction Service?*

_____ Yes
_____ No

7b. If yes to 7a, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining microfiche or papercopy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes do you recommend?

8a. Have you requested or done a search of the ERIC database?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, go to 8b. If no, go to 9.

8b. How do you generally access ERIC materials? Check the two most frequent ways: 1 most frequent, 2 second most frequent.

_____ I search ERIC manually myself.
_____ I search ERIC online myself.
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_____ I have another person onsite search ERIC online.
_____ I use an ERIC search service at a university, college, or school to search ERIC.
_____ I use an ERIC search service other than at a university, college or school to search ERIC.

8c. If yes, do you recommend changes in the procedures for obtaining ERIC searches?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, what changes do you recommend?

9. If you or your organization have used ERIC, please respond to 9a and 9b.

9a. How has the ERIC system been most helpful to you or your organization?

9b. What problems have you had in using the ERIC system?

APPENDIX D
Letter to Teachers
and Administrators

TO: Sample of Teachers, Administrators and Librarians

FROM: Dr. Garry Walz, Chair
Council of ERIC Directors

Dr. Robert W. Howe, Coordinator
ERIC User Survey

Robert W Howe
July 7, 1986

RE: Study of ERIC

The U.S. Department of Education is conducting a study of the ERIC system, products, and services. As a part of this study we are contacting a sample of people who may have used the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) products and services to obtain information about their use of ERIC and their ideas. A similar survey was conducted in the early 1970's and was very useful for making decisions regarding the future of the system.

We are requesting your cooperation in completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the enclosed envelope within the next two weeks. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Dr. Robert W. Howe, ERIC/SMEAC, 1200 Chambers Road, Room 310, Columbus, OH 43212 or call 614-422-6717.

GW:RWH;lss
Enclosure